

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SUBJECT: **PARAMEDIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM**

REFERENCE NO. 716

PURPOSE: To provide base hospitals and paramedic provider agencies with the operational requirements for the Los Angeles County Paramedic Communications System.

AUTHORITY: Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5 Section 1798 (a). California Code of Regulations Title 22, Sections 100168 (b) (4) and 100169 (b).

SYSTEM MANAGEMENT:

- I. The Department of Health Services shall be responsible for:
  - A. Designating one individual within DHS as the Paramedic Communication Systems (PCS) Manager to provide administration and direction of the PCS.
  - B. Utilizing the Los Angeles County Internal Services Department (ISD) for technical consultation and ongoing design, installation and maintenance of the County-owned portion of the PCS.
  - C. Assigning base hospital MED channels and continuous tone-controlled squelch systems (CTCSS) tones in consultations with ISD.
  - D. Notifying affected base hospitals and provider agencies of any proposals for operational or structural changes in the components of the PCS. (No substantial operational or structural changes in the components of the PCS will be made without prior notification of base hospital or provider, or until base hospital, if it wishes, has exhausted administrative due process remedies outlined in the Paramedic Base Hospital Agreement.)
  - E. Promulgating PCS operational procedures and maintenance standards in cooperation with ISD. Changes shall be approved by the communications Management Committee. (See Section V.)
  - F. Establishing and maintaining a communications system, which at minimum, provides radio coverage for 90% of the populated geographical areas 90% of the time.
- II. The Los Angeles County Internal Services Department (ISD) shall be responsible for:
  - A. Assuming ongoing responsibility for the design, development, timely implementation and technical integrity of PCS. (To the extent feasible, ISD shall solicit input from the PCS Manager.)
  - B. Maintaining and repairing County-owned equipment.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 9-16-92

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SUPERSEDES: 6-15-10

APPROVED:

  
Director, EMS Agency

  
Medical Director, EMS Agency

- C. Preparing PCS communications equipment specifications, operating procedures and maintenance standards.

III. Base Hospitals shall be responsible for:

- A. Providing the specific PCS base hospital communications meeting technical requirements outlines in the Los Angeles County's Specification 2027 and operating in accordance with the transmitter power output and antenna specifications as set forth in the Paramedic Base Hospital Agreement.
- B. Acquiring, operating and maintaining communications equipment in accordance with applicable FCC Rules and Regulations and California Public-Safety Radio Association (CPRA) procedures and guidelines.
- C. Operating, maintaining and repairing hospital-owned PCS equipment in accordance with the Paramedic Base Hospital Agreement, including:
  - 1. Emergency repair of PCS equipment
  - 2. Quarterly preventative maintenance inspections (PMIs).
  - 3. Annual FCC frequency and deviation test for all radios, and visual inspection of antenna structures.
- D. Solicitation of annual reports from assigned field provider units about any chronic communication problems to include, but not be limited to, field equipment, dead space, radio failure and co-channel interference, and submit a written report to the EMS Agency (Attention PCS Manager).
- E. Obtaining and maintaining leased circuits to current or new remote control stations or to the closer termination point for new or current stations jointly determined by Hospital, EMS and ISD if hospital is afforded capability of remote control of radio stations location at a County site or other remotely located site.
- F. Paying for all costs associate with maintenance and repair of remote radio stations, including costs of AC power, owned by hospital and located at non-county sites. Requests for new sites or changes to current site configurations must be submitted in writing to the PCS Manager.
- G. Complying with system design, operating and maintenance standards for communications equipment as set forth in the Paramedic Base Hospital Agreement. Request for changes must be submitted in writing to the PCS Manager.
- H. Complying with channel/tone assignments for communication with paramedics. Requests for changes must be submitted in writing to the PCS Manager.
- I. Providing training of personnel assigned to use PCS equipment.
- J. Complying with Paramedic System Trouble Control Procedures set forth in the Base Hospital Agreement.

## IV. Provider Agencies shall be responsible for:

- A. Equipping each approved Advanced Life Support (ALS) unit with at least one portable radio capable of voice communications with base hospitals and transportable to the patient's side. Radio shall meet technical requirements outlined in the Los Angeles County's Specification 2029. Optional permanently mounted mobile radios meeting Specification 2033 may be used, but do not replace portable radio equipment.

Provider agencies may substitute above portable equipment with "hand-held", half-duplex radios described in Specification 2031. This requires written approval by the EMS Agency. Provider agencies must submit field test reports that verify satisfactory communications with the hand-held units in the geographic area they are intended for use. Reasonable measures shall be taken to ensure base hospital voice communications during transport.

- B. Acquiring and maintaining communications equipment in accordance with FCC Rules and Regulations and California Public Safety Radio Association (CPRA) procedures.
- C. Operating, maintaining and repairing provider-owned PCS equipment on a routine and emergency basis.
- D. Operating PCS equipment in compliance with the Effective Radiated Power (ERP) and antenna specification set forth by ISD.
- E. Complying with channel assignments and communications protocols with Base Hospitals.
- F. Using the public telephone or cellular telephone systems to **augment**, but **not replace**, the above-defined communications equipment.
- G. Obtaining written approval from the PCS Manager for field-testing of equipment not currently approved for use by the EMS Agency prior to the tests.

## V. Communications Management Committee

- A. Organized to provide technical and administrative assistance to the PCS Manager in the design, maintenance and operation of PCS.
- B. The committee shall be composed of the following representatives for their designees:
1. PCS Manager appointed by the Director of DHS.
  2. Chief Deputy Director, Internal Services Department
  3. Executive Director, Hospital Association of Southern California.
  4. Representative nominated by the Emergency Medical Services Commission.

5. Representative nominated by the Los Angeles County Ambulance Association.
  6. Representative nominated by the Los Angeles County Chapter of the California Fire Chiefs Association.
- C. Failure of the listed non-County agencies to appoint representatives to the CMC shall not invalidate the formation of the CMC. Alternative arrangements which fulfill the purposes of this committee may also be utilized with the approval of the EMS Agency.
- D. Committee responsibilities include:
1. Assessing current operations of PCS.
  2. Identifying new and ongoing problems.
  3. Developing solutions and schedules for resolving problems.
  4. Reporting status to participants of PCS on a regular basis.
  5. Bringing major problems to the attention of the directors of EMS and ISD.
- E. Committee shall meet on an "as-needed" basis.
- V. Reporting Communication Problems
- A. Provider agencies and base hospitals shall attempt to identify the source of a communication problem (e.g., equipment failure) and take internal steps to resolve the identified problem. If it is determined that the problem involves a County remote site, the base hospital may call the 24 hours/day County ISD Dispatcher at (562) 401-9349.
  - B. Ongoing system problems or problems involving County-owned equipment or sites should be reported in writing to the EMS Agency (Attention: PCS Manager).

**CROSS REFERENCES:**

Los Angeles County Specification 2027  
Los Angeles County Specification 2029  
Los Angeles County Specification 2031  
Los Angeles County Specification 2032  
Paramedic Base Hospital Agreement